

# Overview of Broadband Connectivity in Liberia

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“Access to Broadband Connectivity in  
Liberia in the post-Ebola context: A  
Roundtable with Public and Private Sector  
Stakeholders”

Friday, May 15, 2015 - Cape Hotel, Monrovia

# Presentation Outline

- Essence of Broadband Connectivity
- Pre-ACE Broadband Connectivity Era in Liberia
- Broadband Connectivity in the ACE Era
- Some Policy Interventions to Facilitate Broadband Connectivity
- The Demand Side for Broadband Connectivity
- Conclusion

# Essence of Broadband Connectivity

- To facilitate access to high speed internet
- To enhance efficiency in service delivery
- To improve productivity across business
- To facilitate innovation

There has been two eras of Broadband  
Connectivity in Liberia

# The Pre-ACE Broadband Connectivity Era

- Connectivity was done via satellite
- Connectivity via satellite was cost prohibitive
- Broadband penetration was less than one percent
- Broadband infrastructures were expensive and inadequate
- Many potential users could not access broadband service
- Only Foreign Missions, Business Executives and INGOs could access broadband connectivity

# Broadband Connectivity in the ACE Era

- Cost of broadband connectivity has radically reduced
- Average internet connection speed has tremendously improved
- Mobile broadband penetration has risen from a fraction of one to about 30 percent
- Mobile broadband penetration is concentrated in densely populated cities
- Cities with mobile broadband penetration constitute less than 10 percent of Liberia's 38,000 square miles
- Access to video and data have increased
- Competitive market is driving mobile broadband penetration
- Cable broadband connectivity are limited to institutions
- In areas where market dynamics provide access to broadband, Fiber to Home is virtually non-existent

# Policy Interventions to Facilitate Broadband Connection

No	Description	Objectives	Progress Made
1	National Telecom and ICT Policy of 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Facilitates competition</li> <li>. Promotes broadband connectivity</li> <li>. Promotes PPP for IT infrastructure</li> <li>. Promotes a predictable, transparent and independent regulatory regime, etc.</li> </ul>	On course <b>but infrastructure less than satisfactory</b>
2.	Monrovia Fiber Ring Connectivity (2008...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in infrastructure</li> <li>Improve connectivity</li> <li>Reduce cost</li> </ul>	<b>Funding challenge</b>
3	Policy Framework to Connect Liberia to ACE (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated submarine cable as a preferred option to global connectivity</li> <li>Encouraged PPP as a strategy</li> </ul>	Connected
4	National Universal Access Program Strategy (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses access gap</li> <li>Promotes infrastructure sharing</li> </ul>	Regulatory framework being finalized
5	Policy Directive on Tower Safety and Co-location (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguards Liberia's airspace by ensuring beacon on protruding tower</li> <li>Ensures infrastructure sharing</li> </ul>	LTA to ensure compliance
6	Establishing National Internet Exchange Point - <b>AU funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will address critical infrastructure gap</li> <li>Will reduce cost and enhance efficiency</li> <li>Will keep local content local</li> </ul>	Paperwork finalized; operators to deploy routers;

# The Demand Side of Broadband Connectivity

No	Sector	Service	Goal/Objective
1	Government	E-government	To improve service delivery To enhance efficiency across gov't To promote accountability To reduce barrier dealing with G2C, G2B and G2G
2.	Education	E-education	Provide access to online resources Facilitate distance learning Support research Provide other opportunities
3	Medicine	E-medicine	Bridge access gap between practitioners and their patients; Facilitate access to expert opinion in spite of location/distance
4	Commerce	E-commerce	Remove physical barrier in trade

# Conclusion

- Access to broadband connectivity is a necessity
- Building national backbone will enhance its access
- Market failure has exacerbated access gap between residents of sparsely populated communities and their urban counterparts in populated cities
- GoL and its development partners need to intervene to address access gap by investing in sustainable broadband infrastructure
- Investment in broadband infrastructure will expand market space and accelerate universal access by addressing market failure taking advantage of post-Ebola intervention